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ATG Interviews Dr. Vladimir N. Zaitsev

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College book store, St. Andrew's book store and a variety of other places. I signed at 24 stores around the state during the fourth quarter, and I even drove to Dallas for a signing at the home of my father and step-mother. Every book store I've spoken with has been interested in the book. Some of the signings have been more successful than others.

Square Books was a failure. A man who helped me with my marketing early on did some very good things to help me, but he didn't contact **Square** until early October about a proposed late-October signing, and he had reasoned that with the Ole Miss football team out of town we would have uninterrupted traffic. He couldn't have been more wrong—it was a ghost town. I agreed to a signing at **Reeds** in Tupelo on a Monday, nine days before Christmas, and despite newspaper advertising (which the store paid for), almost no one came. On the other hand, we did great at **Lemuria** and the **Book Mart** (we sent personalized invitations for those, since I have family and friends going way back in Jackson and Starkville), and the **Books A Million** stores in Columbus, Biloxi, Jackson, Meridian and Hattiesburg were very fruitful. I also had signings at the local **Barnes & Noble**, **B. Dalton**, and **Borders** stores.

I really haven't found any prejudice at all toward the book because it's self-published, other than the initial nay-saying from the *Clarion Ledger*. The individual stores are pleased with the look, and nearly all the stores I've visited have been pleased with sales from my signings.

ATG: *What was it like dealing with big online vendors like Amazon or B&N? Have you been successful with them? Did you have to spend a lot on advertising?*

JL: We don't have much online exposure yet. Our own Website, www.dogwoodpress.com is one option, as is www.amazon.com. Simply filling out forms on line got us into consideration for the Amazon program, and we were approved. We've only sold three to four books through Amazon, actually. That doesn't bother me

at all. Our listing on the Amazon site gives us instant credibility, and we make a lot more money selling them through our own site. We're on www.booksamillion.com as well and have sold a handful of books that way. It's simply a matter of finding time to get into everything and everywhere else, since I'm basically a one-man-band in my marketing efforts.

For promotional purposes, we ordered 10,000 foldout brochures which replicate the book cover and a lot of Website information. There's an order form as well as the synopsis (from the book jacket) and the **Martin Hegwood** quote. These look great and have garnered a great many compliments from customers, store owners and librarians. I hand them out at signings and public appearances, and many stores have requested them to display alongside my books at customer service counters.

I've also gotten a lot of mileage out of my association with **WAPT-TV** (I've been a part-time weather anchor there since 1997). They've run several stories on me, and I was a guest on their morning show in September. I've been on all of the stations around the state when I was in those cities (Greenville, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Biloxi, Columbus and Tupelo), and the radio station I used to work for was kind enough to run a free promo schedule for several weeks in November and December. Many people heard it, and I have no doubt it contributed to Jackson-area Christmas sales. I've paid for no advertising other than a pair of small newspaper ads (which I found didn't help much) in Bay St. Louis and Oxford.

ATG: *One thing acquisitions librarians are getting these days are more direct emailings/mailings from authors; I personally am a little leery of authors hawking their own books. Have you done this kind of marketing and if so, do you think it's been successful?*

JL: I am indeed approaching (via phone) librarians around the state to garner interest in my book. I haven't run into anyone who isn't interested in at least seeing a brochure, and nearly all of those librarians are amenable

to buying through me. Most librarians around the state are very interested in adding to their Mississippi author collection, so that helps. I've contacted Birmingham and New Orleans systems in the last few days, and it will be interesting to see if there's any interest there. And I just recently decided to join **Baker & Taylor**, which will make it easier for librarians to purchase the book. [Editor's Note: *On the Record* is in **Books in Print** and can be ordered through any vendor.]

By March 31, 2003, I'm 100% sure we'll have sold about 1,500 books, which is half of the first printing. I'm busy lining up signings for stores in March, April and May, and some will be in Alabama and Louisiana. There's a lot of marketing I'm trying to do, such as entering contests, lining up speaking engagements, submitting proposals to book clubs, which requires more time than I have. So I'm doing as much as I can, over a long period of time. But I'm confident that we'll run out of books by the end of the year, or be close to it.

ATG: *Will your book have a paperback edition?*

JL: **Kaye Wright** gave copies of my book to editors at **Harper Collins**, **St. Martin's** and **Penguin/Putnam**. She suggested to all that they consider releasing my book in trade paperback form. I've been asked often if my book will come out in paperback, and I'm going to give that some thought this spring. As far as a second printing of *On The Record*, that's possible. I'm hopeful that another publisher will be on board at some point and would handle that.

ATG: *Are you working on another book?*

JL: Later this spring I'll hopefully be able to resume work on *Dead Air*, which will be my follow-up novel. I began work on it in 1998 and stopped when I reached the point where I needed to conduct some extensive interviews. I look forward to getting back into it. There's also a fully-complete, professionally edited novel on my hard drive called *The Magnolia Triangle*. This is a personal journey, and although the folks who've read it rave, I'm not sure it's the right follow-up. Maybe a good third novel. 🌳

ATG Interviews Dr. Vladimir N. Zaitsev

Director of the National Library of Russia and President of the Russian Library Association

Interview by **Frederick C. Lynden** <frederick_lynden@brown.edu>

Translated by **Irina L. Lynden**

We have asked **Dr. Vladimir N. Zaitsev**, currently Director of the National Library of Russia (NLR) and President of the Russian Library Association, to tell us about his career and the NLR. The NLR, now more than 200 years old, was founded in 1795 by *Catherine the Great* with two purposes: to maintain complete collections of Russian books and to make them available for general public usage. By now its collections comprise the world's most complete repository of books and periodicals in the Russian, Ukrai-



nian, and Belorussian languages. The library houses an extensive stock of foreign books, and an exceptionally rich collection of incunabula and rare books. The manuscript collection of NLR ranks among the major collections of this kind worldwide. Today the library contains over 33 million items, including books, journals, maps, microforms, prints, engravings, posters, playbills, electronic files, and other materials. — **FL**

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ATG: Doctor Zaitsev, there are two national libraries in Russia, how did this happen?

VZ: Our library, the NLR, was first called the Imperial Public Library and served as a national depository for the Russian Empire. In 1917, after the revolution, it was renamed the State Public Library with the same mission. After the USSR was founded in 1922, and the capital moved from Petrograd to Moscow, it was decided to form the State Library of the entire USSR based on the library of the **Rumiantsev Museum** in Moscow. The State Library of the USSR was opened in 1925 and carried the name of **Vladimir Lenin**. So our **State Public Library** remained the national repository of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, one of the 15 republics within the USSR, while the **Lenin State Library** became the all union repository of books published in the territory of the USSR. With the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the mission of our Library didn't change and we decided to put the word "National" into our title. As to the **Lenin Library**, it was assigned the same functions and called the **Russian State Library** rather than the State Library of the USSR. Thus, Russia has two national libraries with similar missions and functions.

ATG: Tell us about yourself.

VZ: I started my career outside the library field. After graduation from the **Leningrad State Institute of Textile and Light Industry**, I continued my research there as a senior research specialist, and later became a teacher at the Department of Materials Science. I defended my Ph.D. thesis in the area of the Physics and Mechanics of Polymers. Later I was invited to be an administrator in the municipal government of one of the regions of the city of Leningrad. I was in charge of social programs that included culture, science, education and health care. As a part of my duties, I had to work with many cultural institutions including libraries. That's why when I received a proposal from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation to take leadership of one of the major libraries of the USSR, I accepted. Of course, I knew I should not anticipate an "easy life", and yet it appeared that there were more challenges than I expected. Thus, as early as September 1, 1985 (more than 17 years ago), I became the Director of the **Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad**.

ATG: Dr. Zaitsev what are some of the challenges you faced when you became Director of the library?

VZ: It is difficult to tell you about all the challenges that I faced. I would like to remind you that my directorship coincided with dramatic changes in Russia. It was a time of instability, a time of political, social and economic change. Of course, here I can only mention some of the major challenges. My most acute concern at this time was buildings. When I became the director, the Library's collection of 27 million items was divided among 11 buildings that were quite distant from one another. The construction of a new building, which had

been approved by the Government of the USSR in 1973, had not yet begun. One of the largest buildings of the Library—the former Catherine Institute building had been under renovation since 1972. Thus, there were very few possibilities for housing new books and also one had to keep in mind the hazardous conditions in some parts of the book stacks. That's why my first priority as a Director became getting support from the Russian government and city administration for the new building and renovation of the old ones, as well as equipping them. In 1985 the construction of the new building had finally started and the renovation of the Catherine Institute building also moved forward. The city government gave us three new storage facilities and finally in 1988 the government of the USSR issued a new edict promising assistance to the Library for its equipment and collections. Unfortunately, due to political and economic crises in the whole country, the construction of the new building dragged on for 17 years. This April, **President Putin** will finally open the new 63,000 square meter building of the NLR. This building will allow us to move 14 million items and house them in an up-to-date facility.

ATG: Library buildings today need to be up-to-date electronically. How did you deal with this at the NLR?

VZ: When I came to the Library in 1985 there was not a single computer in it. All library processes were based on handwriting or typewriting. Today there are 850 computers at the NLR and 500 of them are networked. I would like to mention that this network connects the three major buildings of the Library. We also have a powerful fiber optic line, which provides library staff and patrons with fast connections to the Internet. We have also created an electronic catalog, available via the Internet, of books in the Russian language from 1725 to date, foreign books and periodicals, 1994 to date, and electronic catalogs for a number of other collections. Anyone who is interested can go to our Website [www.nlr.ru]. Information there is in both the Russian and English languages.

ATG: Of course, providing for staff needs is a significant issue. How did you meet this challenge at the NLR?

VZ: One of the most vital issues that I faced when I began my directorship was a social one. Given the rather low level of salaries for librarians, I had to look for any possibility of additional financial support for the Library. In the late 1980's, during Perestroika, the salaries and living conditions for librarians worsened which caused a great exodus from the field. To keep our highly professional librarians in the Library, we managed to obtain some benefits. First, through a federal program, staff at the NLR received fifty percent increases. Second, we also created a system of additional premium payments (similar to cash awards) that we added to regular salaries for long service, for professional achievements, for using automation in addition to manual processes, for difficult working conditions in some places in the library, and for the holidays. Finally, the library built its own rest/vacation facility where employ-

ees can go with their families during summer vacation.

ATG: You had an excellent program for improving staff salaries and benefits. What other staff concerns were you able to address?

VZ: I also worked at improving the professional image of librarians in the country as well as respect for their work. I am pleased that, with my efforts, the Library received the status of "National Treasure of Russia." This status, funded by the federal government, meant not only support for facilities, but 50 percent increases in salaries for staff, noted above. Further, we initiated an All-Russia Day of Libraries which was made a federal holiday by special act of the President of Russia. This holiday is on the 27th of May, the day of the founding of the Imperial Public Library (now called NLR).

It is hard to provide an evaluation of yourself and your own activities. However, I am pleased that, during my many years as Director, I have managed to assemble a team of colleagues, who not only assist me in my work but also resolve problems that occur in running a major facility such as the NLR.

ATG: You have an impressive list of accomplishments. My next question is what are your plans for the future?

VZ: Our plans for the future are closely connected with developments in the library's technical facilities and reorganization of the library processes with reference to the new electronic and telecommunication technologies. Besides traditional and electronic facilities, in the new building there will be a Cultural and Exhibit Center and a concert hall. In the main building, we are planning to open a Voltaire Center with his library, which was purchased in the 18th century by **Catherine the Great**. In the Catherine Institute building, we are creating a state of the art Computer Center for Youth and intend to develop and enlarge the music and newspaper departments. We will now have more comfortable conditions for serving patrons. Prior to the new building, we had a shortage of reader spaces and we had special reading rooms for different categories of researchers. With the opening of the new building we can offer a library card for each visitor and he/she can choose in what building he/she would like to work. I should add to this list of our goals—increasing access to foreign electronic resources. With our excellent computer facilities and telecommunication lines, the resolution of this task completely depends on financial support and at NLR we work hard on fund raising and public relations.

ATG: You mentioned several times the word, Perestroika, in reference to your activities. In your opinion how did Perestroika affect librarians and libraries in Russia?

VZ: It affected them dramatically and in many ways. Librarians are now very different from what they were in the sixties and seventies. It doesn't relate as much to professionalism which was high in previous years, but it definitely relates to their active position in society. I would mention three major changes in the Russian library world. First, Russian librarians became active in international professional

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programs and events. You can see them in large numbers at IFLA sessions, ALA conferences, at major book fairs, at workshops, and seminars. Second, **Perestroika** coincided with the technological revolution in Russian libraries. American libraries went through it in the late sixties and early seventies. Russia was late and we, in the hardship of **Perestroika**, had to leapfrog to achieve the technological level of Western libraries. Third, Russian librarians are more active in the political and social life of society. Only after **Perestroika** did Russian librarians unite in library associations. They elected their first members from the library community to local governments. They proposed and wrote a number of federal laws for libraries. They not only initiated these proposals but were also responsible for the text, e.g., the Federal Library Law which guarantees free access to information among other rights. The first library association was the St. Petersburg Association in 1987 and, in 1994, the Russian Library Association was established. Very soon afterwards, the RLA elected me as its first president, and its office is now located in the NLR.

ATG: You are President of the Russian Library Association (RLA). Can you tell us more about RLA?

VZ: The process of democratization resulted in many changes not only in Russian society, but also on the Russian library scene. One of those changes is the foundation of the **Russian Library Association**. There are several professional organizations and unions in Russia but the largest is **RLA**. According to Russian legislation, **RLA** can include only corporate members. It has been seven years since it was created and currently there are 375 members of **RLA**, which comprises approximately 25,000 participating librarians. **RLA** is the main coordinating body for the library community in Russia having as its main goal uniting the efforts and supporting the activities of its members; preserving and developing librarianship, and raising the status of Russian libraries and the library profession in society. **RLA** takes a leadership role in developing cooperative projects, and I will mention some of them: creation of **RUSMARC**, the Russian national MARC format; a national program for preservation of book collections which worked in cooperation with **Springer Verlag**; Assistance to Access for Information which provides electronic access to journals from **Springer** and **Academic Press** — some 400 journals; and The Code of Ethics. The latter is a document created by a roundtable within **RLA** that is called Communication and Special Ethics for Librarians. These are the major projects.

ATG: I have seen you at many ALA conferences. Tell us what you learned about ALA which has been helpful to you as President of RLA?

VZ: Cooperation between American and Russian libraries has a long history, but relations between associations started only in 1995 when I first visited the ALA conference in Chicago and met with ALA's President-Elect **Betty Turock**. We were eager to learn from the experience of other library associations and ALA, the oldest library association in the world, in particular. I visited not only the ALA conference but also its headquarters in Chicago. How do we use the ALA experience in the RLA? We

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took the same principle of annual conferences, in our case, in May. Each annual conference takes place in a different city. During our RLA annual conference, we also started to organize exhibitions with publishers and library vendors displaying books, equipment, and software and other technological products. We have developed very friendly relations with ALA, exchanging materials, publications, and delegations of librarians. In particular, we hosted former presidents of ALA, **Betty Turock** and **Barbara Ford**, and welcomed **Gary Strong**, when he was an organizer of the Boston IFLA conference. We

hope to develop more cooperation between our associations in the future.

ATG: Can you tell us more about NLR's involvement in the International arena?

VZ: NLR became a member of IFLA in 1992. It also joined **LIBER (League of European Research Libraries)** in 1992. Together with other libraries in this organization we work on establishing access to the European cultural heritage. Since 1993, NLR has been a member of **CERL (Consortium of European Research Libraries)** working on a retrospective database of the European

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2001 Canadian Librarian of the Year

by David Swords <DSwords@YBP.com>

As summer ALA in Toronto approaches, America's academic librarians will be curious about the issues that confront their Canadian hosts. ATG asked Ernie Ingles, Canadian Librarian of the Year in 2001 and a longstanding force in the profession, if he would talk to us about what he sees. David Swords of YBP Library Services visited Ernie in Edmonton for ATG and filed the interview that follows.

Note from DS: The interview, conducted in late February over dinner at Jack's Grill (one of the best restaurants in North America, I think), began with a conversation about retirement.

EI: I've built a log cabin in the Okanagan Valley. Oh, it's a beautiful part of Canada, and it's very mild in winter. Its winter climate would be probably a lot like Northern California's. It's a rare occasion the temperature falls below 35 to 40 Fahrenheit. It's semi-arid so it's usually in the 90F° plus in the summer. My daughter lives out there as well with her husband, and he has golfed 12 times this year.

ATG: This year? That's like a miracle.

EI: God's waiting room is what I call it. There are few drawbacks. One of the great benefits is the wine produced in the area. Superb!

(And we drank a bottle of one of them over dinner.)

ATG: Now that you bring it up, in the U.S. a lot of librarians are nearing retirement age. Is there talk about the same phenomenon here?

EI: Very much so. I am heading up a National Strategy for Human Resources, which is a planning coalition of representatives from across the country. We're funded from the Fed-

eral Government and from a number of library organizations, including the Canadian Library Association, Canadian Association of Research Libraries, and the Council of Large Urban Public Libraries. The coalition is doing a close study about what the human requirements for libraries are going to look like in the next ten plus years.

ATG: Any early information?

EI: We have the same demographics that you have, baby boom demographics. Drilling down a bit from aggregate census data we can see that Canada is actually about two or three years ahead of you, which is to say, we are reaching the retirement bulge a couple of years sooner than the U.S. It's consistent with history. Our boys came home from World War II a bit faster than your boys did and started things going.

We have developed what we call the 8 Rs strategy (and I'm never going to get them all right. We started with 5 Rs then 6 Rs and now it's 8). Let's see, in no particular order, the 8Rs are Recruitment, Retention, Retirement, Restructuring, Repatriation, Re-accréditation, Remuneration, and Rejuvenation. Did I get all eight? Well, well.

Whatever happens with regard to Recruitment, Retention, Retirement and most of the other Rs, the future probably boils down with some inevitability to Restructuring of how we do things in the our libraries. But let's come back to that. Here are some brief highlights about what each R means.

Remuneration. Our profession lacks the salary scale to encourage recruitment. But what can we do about it? What's the strategy to put in place to try to make participation in the library profession attractive to those who clearly are choosing other careers? We have lost ground

here in Canada over the years to other professions, nursing in particular. Our starting salaries for librarians are in the mid to high \$30,000 (Canadian, which is about two-thirds of the U.S. dollar), maybe if you are really lucky in the low \$40s. Nursing graduates are coming out in the low \$50s and moving within nine years, as an example, to the mid 70s. Historically, we were ahead of nursing. The important question is why? Why haven't we been able to demonstrate our value to society? Why are we losing ground?

Repatriation. Over the next five to ten years one of our recruitment strategies has to include repatriation. About 20 to 30% of our library school graduates over the past ten years have gone to the States, to the Middle East, all over. We have to bring them back.

Repatriation goes with Reaccreditation. Our birth rate is such that we are going to be a country that relies increasingly on immigration just to keep the population stable, let alone grow it. **Reaccreditation** (the word is kind of a stretch) essentially means that in the past we have been fairly stingy accrediting librarians from countries outside North America. We are looking at reaccrediting librarians from Asia and the Middle East, for example.

Rejuvenation. Essentially how we breathe life into those who have ten years or so left until they retire to obtain what we need from them in terms of professional development and the management of knowledge transfer. You have this big batch of folks moving out, but are we appropriately mentoring and developing those that are coming in as this change quickly overtakes us? We are not looking only at the retirement of librarians in many libraries; support staff has a similar demographic look and feel and is aging pretty quickly as well.

If every library school graduate in Canada stayed in the profession, did not leave the country or stray from the traditional library—which we know never happens, but if they did not become information specialists, knowledge managers, Web designers, and the like, outside traditional libraries—if this mythical world where they all worked in a traditional box prevailed—we would barely meet 40% of the positions that will be opening up in Canada. Which, as I said, takes us to restructuring.

ATG: Restructuring is going to be driven by lack of people to do the jobs more than anything else, more than by budget cuts?

EI: Yes, I think so. Restructuring might mean we still have lots of people, but they will be a much different mix. What today is a professional activity may migrate to a different level of staff, to a para-professional of some kind. We already have seen that in spades over the years in our technical services, but this could accelerate. A lot of libraries still have a high percentage of technical services people who hold an M.L.S. I think there is going to be a

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book between 1450 and 1830, the so-called time of the hand press. In 2002, I was elected for the third time as one of the co-directors of this Consortium. NLR was also among the core founders of the Union of Baltic Libraries. We pay a lot of attention to cooperation with the national libraries of the world through participation in the Conference of National Library Directors.

ATG: What do you find most satisfying in your career?

VZ: The thing to be mentioned is that I like my job and it gives me more satisfaction than distress, though there are many disappointments as well.

ATG: Do you have any hobbies and what do you do in your spare time?

VZ: There is practically no time left for entertainment and hobbies. If I get some time, I would enjoy traveling, sports, being outdoors in natural surroundings, and meeting my friends. I would like to build something and, of course, to read.

ATG: May I ask you about your reading preferences?

VZ: I like to read all literary genres especially current history, social-political commentary, and popular science, but for the most part I must read job-related papers and documents. Only now and then, when on trips, do I get an opportunity to read currently published literature in order not to be completely out of touch with life.

ATG: What book is on your bedside table now?

VZ: Daniil Granin, *Vechera c Petrom Velikim* (Evenings with Peter the Great). 